

NATIONAL**President's rule comes into effect in Jammu & Kashmir**

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has come under President's rule from 20th December 2018 as Governor's rule in the state completed its six months. It implies that now all the policy decisions related to Jammu and Kashmir will be taken by the Union Cabinet. The state faced a political crisis when 25-member BJP withdrew its support from Mehbooba Mufti-led coalition government, reducing it to a minority government in the state. Thereafter, the Governor's rule was imposed in the state.

In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, which has a separate Constitution, six months of Governor's rule is mandatory before President's rule under Article 92 of its Constitution. All the legislative powers are exercised by the Governor in case of Governor's rule.

Now, after the proclamation for the President's rule has been made, the legislative powers of the state shall be exercised under the authority of Parliament. The Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers will aid and advise the president regarding the decisions related to the state.

President's Rule:

- Under Article 356 of the Indian Constitution, the Union government can take over the affairs of the state government
- When state government is unable to function according to the constitutional provisions. This is called as President's rule in the state.
- President's Rule in a state can continue for 6 months. It can be extended, with the approval of both the houses done every 6 months, for a maximum of 3 years For President's rule to continue over a year every 6 months following conditions should be met: 1. There should already be a National emergency across the country, or in the whole or any part of the state. 2. The Election Commission of India should certify that the conduct of elections is not possible in the concerned state

Goa Liberation Day((19 Dec)

Goa recently celebrated the 57th Liberation Day. On this day, Goa attained independence from the 450-years of Portuguese rule.

Operation Vijay:

- Portuguese were the first ones to colonize parts of India and were the last to leave. The Portuguese invaded Goa in the year 1510.
- Operation Vijay began on December 17, 1961, when the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru ordered the invasion. With a force of almost 30,000, the Indian attack overpowered the ill-prepared Portuguese 3,000 member army. With minimal blood-shed, the attack was successful and was carried forward to retrieve the other Portuguese-controlled areas, Daman and Diu.
- At this point on December 18, the Portuguese Governor General Vassalo da Silva gave up control of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu. Three days after the attack began, Goa finally became a part of India.

Referendum and Statehood:

The Goa Opinion Poll was a referendum held in the state of Goa, India, on 16 January 1967, to decide the future of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu within the Indian Union. Although popularly called an opinion poll, it was in fact, a referendum, as the results of the poll were binding on the government of India. The referendum offered the people of Goa a choice between continuing as a union territory or merging with the state of Maharashtra. It is the only referendum to have been held in independent India. The people of Goa voted against the merger and Goa continued to be a union territory. Subsequently, in 1987, Goa became a full-fledged state within the Indian Union.

Commemorative Postage Stamp on Rajkumar Shukla

The government recently released a Commemorative Postage Stamp on Rajkumar Shukla. Department of Posts has been paying a tribute to eminent personalities who have made a significant contribution to public life especially freedom fighters. With this stamp, the Department has released 43 issues in the current calendar year.

Rajkumar Shukla: In drawing the attention of Mahatma Gandhi to the plight of peasants suffering under an oppressive Teen-Kathia system established by European indigo planters in Champaran, Bihar, Rajkumar Shukla made a seminal contribution culminating in the launch of the Champaran Satyagraha in 1917 by Mahatma Gandhi.

Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016 passed by Lok Sabha

Lok Sabha has passed Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2016 on 19th December 2018 to protect surrogacy in the country. The bill has banned commercial surrogacy and allows only altruistic surrogacy. The bill

protects the rights of the surrogate mother and the child born from surrogacy and promotes ethical surrogacy. Surrogacy is defined as an agreement between a couple who cannot conceive and a surrogate mother to carry their child.

Provisions of Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2016:

- The bill is applicable to all the states of India except Jammu and Kashmir.
- The bill provides the constitution of National Surrogacy board and State Surrogacy board for regulation of surrogacy process.
- The bill is providing surrogacy to only Indian citizens.
- Thus, Foreigners, NRI and PIOs are not allowed.
- Homosexuals and Single parents are also not allowed for surrogacy and bars the couple who already have children
- The couple seeking surrogacy should possess a certificate of essentiality issued by appropriate authority.
- The bill provides that women can only surrogate once in her lifetime and her age should be in between 25 to 35 years.
- The couple who intend for surrogacy should be aged between 23 to 50 years and married for at least 5 years.
- The bill also provides provision for the custody of the child to be born which will be passed by a court of the Magistrate of the first class or above.
- The bill contains the provision of penalty and imprisonment if the person violated the law.

National Surrogacy Board

- The board consists of:
- Chairperson – Minister in-charge of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- Vice Chairperson – Secretary to the Government of India incharge of Department dealing with surrogacy matters.
- Members – Three women members of Parliament, Three members of Ministries of Central government from Women and Child Development, Legislative Department in Ministry of Law and Justice and Ministry of Home Affairs not below the rank of Joint Secretary, Director-General of Health Services of Central Government and ten experts members.

Background:

The bill was first introduced in Lok Sabha as The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2016 on 21 November 2018. In 2017, it was then referred to Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare. 102nd report of the bill was placed in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha last year.

Commercial Surrogacy : The surrogacy which includes sale or purchase of human embryo or gametes or surrogate mother. If the surrogate mother will be rewarded remunerations or financial benefits other than medical expenses.

Altruistic Surrogacy: The surrogacy which includes no financial benefits to the surrogate mother other than medical expenses. It includes insurance coverage for the mother and protects the ethics of society

INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL

USA to cancel the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty

Russia has confirmed that the United States of America has decided to cancel the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty signed between Russian and the USA in 1987. The USA had already announced the withdrawal decision from the INF treaty in October 2018.

The United States first alleged in its July 2014 Compliance Report that Russia is in violation of its INF Treaty obligations “not to possess, produce, or flight-test” a ground-launched cruise missile having a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers or “to possess or produce launchers of such missiles.”

Subsequent State Department assessments in 2015, 2016, and 2017 repeated these allegations. Russia denies that it is in violation of the agreement. On December 8, 2017, the Trump administration released a strategy to counter alleged Russian violations of the Treaty.

Intermediate- Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty:

The 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty required the United States and the Soviet Union to eliminate and permanently forswear all of their nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges of 500 to 5,500 kilometers.

The treaty marked the first time the superpowers had agreed to reduce their nuclear arsenals, eliminate an entire category of nuclear weapons, and utilize extensive on-site inspections for verification.

As a result of the INF Treaty, the United States and the Soviet Union destroyed a total of 2,692 short-, medium-, and intermediate-range missiles by the treaty's implementation deadline of June 1, 1991.

Despite its name, the INF Treaty covers all types of ground-launched cruise and ballistic missiles — whether their payload is conventional or nuclear. Moscow and Washington are prohibited from deploying these missiles anywhere in the world, not just in Europe. However, the treaty applies only to ground-launched systems. Both sides are free to deploy air- and sea-launched missiles within the 500-to-5,500-kilometer range.

ECONOMY

National Strategy for New India – NITI Aayog

The NITI Aayog has unveiled a strategy document called the “Strategy for New India@75” suggesting various reforms to make India a 4-trillion dollar economy by 2022-23. The strategy plan talks about various several economic reforms that should be taken in order to accelerate India's economy to reach the 4 trillion USD mark. The main idea is to go for such reforms in the economy that will keep India growing at 8% annually that could be quickened to 9-10% by 2022-23 but ensuring that such growth of economy is clean, inclusive, formalised and sustainable.

Recommendations:

On Drivers:

- The acceleration in economic growth must be inclusive, sustained, ‘clean’ and formalised.
- The economy has to be steadily accelerated to achieve a GDP growth rate of about 8% on average during 2018-23.
- The investment rate (gross fixed capital formation) should be raised from the present 29% of GDP to 36% by 2022-23, of which half must come from public investment.
- India should aim to increase its tax-GDP ratio to at least 22% of GDP by 2022-23 to enhance public investment.
- Regarding agriculture, the emphasis has to be shifted towards converting farmers to ‘agripreneurs’.
- The creation of a unified national market, a freer export regime and abolition of the Essential Commodities Act are essential for boosting agricultural growth.
- A strong push has to be given towards ‘Zero Budget Natural Farming’ techniques that reduce costs, improve land quality and increase farmers’ incomes.
- Also, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana needs to include weather-based insurance into its current mode of implementation.
- To ensure maximum employment creation, complete codification of labour laws and a massive effort must be made to upscale and expand apprenticeships.
- A mission named “Explore in India” has to be launched to revamp minerals exploration and licensing policy.

On Infrastructure -

- The establishment of the Rail Development Authority (RDA), which is already approved, has to be expedited.
- RDA will advise or make informed decisions on an integrated, transparent and dynamic pricing mechanism for the railways.
- An IT-enabled platform for integrating different modes of transport and promoting multi-modal and digitized mobility has to be developed.
- Hence, the government should aim to deliver all government services at the state, district, and gram panchayat level digitally by 2022-23.
- These infrastructural measures are crucial to enhance the competitiveness of Indian business as also ensure the citizens’ ease of living.

On Inclusion –

- Regarding health, the Ayushman Bharat programme has to be implemented successfully including the establishment of 150,000 health and wellness centres across the country.
- A focal point for public health has to be created at the central level along with their state counterparts, through which an integrative medicine curriculum can be promoted.
- Regarding education, the quality of the school education system has to be upgraded by creating a new innovation ecosystem at the ground level by establishing at least 10,000 Atal Tinkering Labs by 2020.

- An electronic national educational registry could be conceptualized for tracking each child's learning outcomes.
- Regarding housing, focus must be laid upon affordable housing in urban areas to improve workers' living conditions and ensure equity while providing a strong impetus to economic growth.

On Governance –

- The recommendations of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission have to be implemented before appointing a successor for it.
- The backlog of pending cases in the courts can be addressed by shifting part of workload out of regular court system.
- A new autonomous body, namely the Arbitration Council of India, has to be set up to grade arbitral institutions and accredit arbitrators.
- Regarding disinvestment, the government has to offload its stake from non-strategic public sector enterprises (PSEs).
- This will attract private investment and contribute to the exchequer, enabling higher public investment in other sectors.
- Regarding the Swachh Bharat Mission, the scope has to be expanded to cover initiatives for landfills, plastic waste and municipal waste and generating wealth from waste. .
- Higher monetary compensation and social security to rag pickers and small sanitation workers has to be given for segregating waste.
- This will help waste-to-energy plants as well as projects related to dry waste management and help reduce the burden on landfills.
- Also, Solid and liquid waste management projects should be covered under priority sector lending.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

GSAT-7A launched

ISRO has launched military communication satellite GSAT-7A. GSAT-7A was successfully injected into its orbit by GSLV-F11 that was launched from Sriharikota.

GSAT-7A:

- GSAT-7A has been placed in the geostationary orbit and this communication satellite is expected to help the IAF to interlink different ground radar stations, airbases and AWACS (Airborne Warning And Control System) aircraft. The idea is to improve the IAF's network-centric warfare capabilities.
- It is an advanced communication satellite with a Gregorian Antenna and many other new technologies.
- It is the heaviest satellite being launched by GSLV with an indigenously developed cryogenic stage.
- The GSAT-7A is expected to have the Ku-band transponders and two deployable solar arrays onboard.
- It is the 39th Indian communication satellite of ISRO to provide services to the users in Ku-band over the Indian region.
- The GSAT-7A is also expected to be a big push for drone operations as it will help the Navy reduce the reliance on on-ground control stations and take satellite-control of military unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) which should help boost the range and endurance of the UAVs.
- The satellite, being dubbed as 'angry bird' by some, is likely to enhance the range of communication and also aid in aircraft to aircraft communication.
- In addition to GSAT-7A, the IAF would also be getting the GSAT-7C in a few years, to boost the network-centric operations.

GSAT 7 series: The GSAT 7 series was launched in 2013 as a dedicated communications satellite for the Indian Navy, which made the Navy completely independent of relying on foreign satellites for its blue water capabilities, thanks to GSAT 7 having a 2,000 nautical mile footprint. This helps in providing real-time inputs to Indian warships, submarines and maritime aircraft.

GSLV: The GSLV is ISRO's fourth generation launch vehicle that has three stages. The four liquid strap-ons and a solid rocket motor at the core constitute the first stage. The second stage is equipped with a high thrust engine that uses liquid fuel. The cryogenic upper stage forms the third and final stage of the vehicle. The GSLV-F11 was the seventh flight carrying indigenously developed cryogenic upper stage.